



CPED STAFF REPORT

Prepared for the City Planning Commission

CPC Agenda Item #7
 April 7, 2014
 BZZ-6473

LAND USE APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE
Project Name: Essex Hotel Project
Prepared By: Aaron Hanauer, Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2494
Applicant: Daniel Oberpriller, CPM Development
Project Contact: Scott Nelson, DJR Architecture
Request: To allow for the construction of a five-story, 122-room, hotel
Required Applications:

Rezoning	Petition to rezone the property located at 1014, 1018 and 1022 Essex Street SE, 506 Huron Boulevard SE from the R5/Multiple Family District to the C3A/Community Activity Center District
Conditional Use Permit	Conditional use permit application to increase the maximum permitted height of a commercial building from 4 stories or 56 feet to approximately 5 stories or 63 feet at the tallest point
Variance	Variance to increase the maximum floor area ratio from 2.7 to 3.2
Variance	Variance to reduce the interior setback (south) from 5 feet to 2.1 feet to allow for an uncovered driveway
Variance	Variance to reduce the number of off-street loading spaces from 2 to 0
Variance	Variance to reduce the front yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line to allow a transformer
Site Plan Review	To allow for the construction of a five-story, 122-room, hotel

SITE DATA

Existing Zoning	R5/Multiple Family District UA/University Area Overlay District
Lot Area	19,782 square feet / 0.45 acres
Ward(s)	2
Neighborhood(s)	Prospect Park East River Road
Designated Future Land Use	Public and institutional
Land Use Features	University of Minnesota Growth Center, Stadium Village Transit Station Area
Small Area Plan(s)	Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan (2012)

Date Application Deemed Complete	March 14, 2014	Date Extension Letter Sent	September 30, 2014
End of 60-Day Decision Period	May 13, 2014	End of 120-Day Decision Period	July 12, 2014

BACKGROUND

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE. The subject site is at the southwest corner of Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE and contains three parcels: 1014, 1020 and 1022 Essex Street/506 Huron Boulevard SE. The lots 1014 and 1020 Essex Street SE each have a single family house; the lot at 1022 Essex Street SE/506 Huron Boulevard SE has two single-family houses. There is a large bituminous contiguous parking area at the back of these properties that provides a total of 14 off-street parking spaces.

In and around December 2013, the applicant requested a demolition of historic review letter for the four houses on the project site. A historic review letter provides an applicant a determination on whether a wrecking permit can be administratively approved or will require a heritage preservation commission review via a demolition of historic resource application. The historic review letter determination is based on the historic information known at the time of the review. None of the four houses on the subject site met the definition of a historic resource.

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD. The subject property is located in the Prospect Park East River Road neighborhood and near the University of Minnesota East Bank campus. The subject site is also located three blocks from the METRO Green Line Stadium Village Light Rail Station.

The surrounding area has a variety of uses. Between Essex Street SE and Washington Avenue SE to the north, there is primarily a mix of medium/high-density residential and commercial properties. Between Essex Street SE and East River Road to the south, it is primarily a mix of low, medium and high-density residential. In the past four years, there have been two high-density residential apartment buildings built within three blocks of the project site; the six-story Solhaus Tower at 515 Huron Boulevard SE and the six-story Solhaus at 2428 Delaware Street SE. In addition, the five-story, 330,000 square foot University of Minnesota Ambulatory Care Center is currently under construction a block to the west and the 11-story, WaHu apartment building at 1016 Washington Avenue SE is anticipated to be under construction in 2014.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION. The applicant is proposing to demolish the four houses on the project site and build a five-story extended-stay hotel with 122 rooms and underground parking for 41 cars. The proposed five-story, u-shaped hotel would have the main pedestrian and off-street parking entrance on Essex Street SE. A covered, vehicle drop-off area is proposed in front of the main entrance. The underground parking is accessed via a one-way driveway from Essex Street SE; those exiting the underground parking area will use a one-way driveway onto Huron Boulevard SE. The building's main exterior materials are cast stone, red brick and stucco. The applicant anticipates that patients of the University of Minnesota Ambulatory Care Center and their families will make up a large percentage of their clientele, as well as visiting professors, researchers and medical professionals working with the University.

COW REVIEW: The applicant attended the January 30, 2014, Planning Commission Committee of the Whole meeting. The applicant has updated their plans to reflect Planning Commission feedback in the following ways:

- Designed a more prominent entrance along Essex Street SE which includes increasing the width of the entry/columns;
- Increased the window and opening sizes (including parking area) along the first floor of Essex Street SE;

- Provided more details of a landscaping/public realm plan along Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE including seasonal grasses, shrubs, trees and benches;
- Provided greater activity at the corner of Huron Boulevard SE and Essex Street SE by changing the interior use from hotel rooms to a dining room intended for hotel guests for morning and afternoon functions. In addition, the applicant is proposing to provide sidewalk seating with direct access to the dining room;
- Proposed eight bike parking spaces in the boulevard along Essex Street SE.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. As of March 31, 2014, no public comments have been received. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Planning Commission for consideration.

ANALYSIS

REZONING

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a petition to rezone the property at_1014-1022 Essex and 506 Huron Boulevard SE, based on the following [findings](#):

I. *Whether the amendment is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.*

The proposed rezoning for the properties at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE from R5/Multiple Family District to C3A/Community Activity Center District is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan and the recently updated *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan* that provides more detailed guidance for the immediate area. The R5 Multiple Family District is established to provide an environment of high-density apartments, congregate living arrangements and cluster developments on lots with a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet. The purpose of the C3A zoning is established to provide for the development of major urban activity and entertainment centers with neighborhood scale retail sales, residential uses and institutional and public uses.

There are three parts of the Minneapolis comprehensive plan's land use chapter that provide guidance for considering a rezoning application: the identified land use features that are part of, adjacent to, or nearby a project site (e.g. University of Minnesota Growth Center), the future land use map and the general land use policy. The proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A is consistent with the three applicable comprehensive plan land use features; the University of Minnesota Growth Center, the Stadium Village Transit Station Area and the neighboring Stadium Village Activity Center (a half block to the north).

The subject site is located within the University of Minnesota Growth Center. A growth center is described by the comprehensive plan as a busy, interesting and attractive place characterized by a concentration of business and employment activity and a wide range of complementary activities taking place throughout the day into the evening. These activities include residential, office, retail, entertainment and recreational uses. The Minneapolis comprehensive plan recognizes the University of Minnesota as being home to one of the largest concentrations of employment in the City. The University of Minnesota is planning a major expansion with the Ambulatory Care Center a ½ block to the west. Allowing for the rezoning from R5 to C3A of the subject properties will allow for more employment opportunities and complementary uses to the institutional ambulatory care center and the multifamily neighboring residential uses. Land Use Policy 1.15 and Implementation Step 1.15.4 support the proposed rezoning based on the project being a growth center.

Land Use Policy 1.15: Support development of growth centers as locations for concentration of jobs and housing and supporting services.

Implementation Step 1.15.4 Promote the integration of major public and private institutional campuses located in growth centers, including health care and educational services, with the function and character of surrounding areas.

The proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A is also consistent with the Stadium Village Transit Station Area and the comprehensive plan policies for transit station areas (TSAs). TSAs are located within an approximate ½ mile radius from transit stations, reflecting an understanding that most walking trips to and from transit stations are ten minutes or less in duration. The subject site is less than a ¼ mile from the actual station (0.246 miles). The comprehensive plan recognizes that potential TSA redevelopment opportunities are generally highest within ¼ mile of the transit station. Allowing for the rezoning from R5 to C3A will allow for positive redevelopment opportunities and complementary uses to the University of Minnesota campus and the neighboring multifamily residential uses. Land Use Policy 1.13 and Implementation Step 1.13.1 support the proposed rezoning based on the project being in a TSA.

Land Use Policy 1.13: Support high-density development near transit stations in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places.

Implementation Step 1.13.1 Encourage pedestrian-oriented services and retail uses as part of higher-density development near transit stations.

The proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A is also consistent with the Stadium Village Activity Center that is located ½ block to the north. Activity centers generally have a mix of uses with citywide and regional draw, including areas of employment and commercial development. The applicant's proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A will allow for complementary uses a ½ block to the south without an adverse impact to the neighboring uses.

The proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A is also consistent with the recently updated future land use. In August 2012, the Minneapolis City Council approved the *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan*. As part of this planning process, the future land use for the project site and the two blocks to the west was revised from urban neighborhood to public and institutional in large part to reflect the expansion of the University of Minnesota eastward. The Minneapolis comprehensive plan states that the public and institutional future land use is intended to accommodate public and semi-public uses, including museums, hospitals, civic uses and college and university campuses. The comprehensive plan also states that residential is generally not appropriate for the public and institutional future land use areas. The applicant's proposal to rezone the property from R5 to C3A will allow for nonresidential uses (as well as residential uses) that complement neighboring public and institutional uses, while respecting the neighboring multifamily residential uses.

Finally, the proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A is consistent with the recently approved *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan*. The small area plan breaks the study area into five character areas. The subject site is located within the Huron Boulevard Gateway District. The plan describes the Huron Boulevard Gateway District as a transitional zone which has seen a fair amount of redevelopment in recent decades from industrial to high-density residential. It is anticipated this trend is likely to continue as projects continue to be proposed and built on some of the remaining sites. The subject site and the two blocks to the west are unique part of the Huron Boulevard Gateway District. The future land use for a majority of the blocks in the character area is high-density residential; however, the future land of the subject site and the two blocks to the west is public and institutional. The plan recommendations for the Huron Boulevard Gateway District are

to generally support high-density residential development and to encourage land use along Huron Boulevard SE that supports pedestrian oriented environment, balanced against heavy vehicle traffic flow and acknowledge its role as a gateway to the area. The proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A will support high-density residential, but also support nonresidential uses that the public and institutional future land use category supports.

2. *Whether the amendment is in the public interest and is not solely for the interest of a single property owner.*

A rezoning from R5 to C3A is in the public interest. It will allow for orderly redevelopment in an area that it is encouraged. The rezoning will also support the University of Minnesota Growth Center, the METRO Green Line, the Stadium Village Transit Station Area and the Stadium Village Activity Center, which is located a half block to the north. Furthermore, the proposed rezoning maintains the opportunity for a building in the Huron Boulevard Gateway District to be a gateway landmark to the University of Minnesota, which is encouraged by the *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan*. Those traveling to the University of Minnesota via Huron Boulevard SE or the METRO Green Line will have a clear view of the subject site.

3. *Whether the existing uses of property and the zoning classification of property within the general area of the property in question are compatible with the proposed zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.*

The existing uses within the general area of the property are compatible with the proposed zoning classification. A majority of the uses within the area are medium to high-density residential developments. Nonresidential uses include the University of Minnesota Ambulatory Care Center that is currently under construction a half block to the west. The proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A of the subject site will allow for uses on the subject parcels that are compatible with the neighboring residential and nonresidential uses. C3A is supportive of high-density residential and neighborhood scale retail sales and services.

The zoning classification of the surrounding properties is also compatible with the proposed zoning classification. The immediate surroundings of the subject parcels are R5, like the subject properties. However, within a three block area there are a variety of other zoning districts that allow for more intense uses, including C3A. Other more-permissive zoning districts within this three block area include the R6, OR2, C2 and I1.

4. *Whether there are reasonable uses of the property in question permitted under the existing zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.*

Reasonable uses are allowed under the current zoning, R5 zoning district. However, as the applicant points out, R5 zoning is less compatible compared to C3A zoning with the public and institutional future land use guidance for the site. Residential uses are the primary use in the R5 zoning district and residential uses are not typically encouraged in the public and institutional future land use category. The R5 zoning district only allows five commercial uses. The proposed C3A rezoning would increase the number of commercial uses as permitted or conditional from five to 48. The C3A zoning district also allows 10 residential uses as permitted and conditional.

5. *Whether there has been a change in the character or trend of development in the general area of the property in question, which has taken place since such property was placed in its present zoning classification, where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of particular property.*

There has been a change in the character and trend of development in the area of the properties in question since the property was placed in its present zoning classification. The subject parcels have

been zoned R5 since 1963. In the last four years there have been at least four major residential and non-residential developments within a three block area that have been built or approved. This includes the six-story, Solhaus Tower and Solhaus Apartment buildings that have been completed, the University of Minnesota Ambulatory Care Center (under construction) and the 11-story WaHu Student Housing project that is anticipated to break ground in 2014.

As part of the 2012 *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan*, the study area was divided into five character areas. The subject site is in the Huron Boulevard Corridor Character Area. The 2012 plan describes this area as a “transitional zone which has seen a fair amount of redevelopment in recent decades from industrial to high-density residential.” The *Stadium Village University Avenue Station Area Plan* also anticipated that additional development would take place in this character area as older residential structures became more appealing for redevelopment.

FOR REZONINGS ONLY

ZONING PLATE NUMBER. 22

LEGAL DESCRIPTION. Parcel 1: The West 50 feet of Lots 6 and 7, Block 31, Regents Addition, Hennepin County, Minnesota. (Abstract Property).

Parcel 2: The West 50 feet of the East 100 feet of Lots 6 and 7, Block 31, Regents Addition, Hennepin County, Minnesota (Abstract Property).

Parcel 3: The East 50 feet of Lots 6 and 7, Block 31, Regents Addition, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application to allow a conditional use permit application to increase the maximum permitted height of a commercial building from 4 stories or 56 feet to approximately 5 stories or 63 feet at the tallest point based on the following [findings](#):

1. *The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.*

The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use for a five-story, 63 foot tall structure (at its tallest point) will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare. The existing R5 and the proposed C3A zoning districts allow buildings by right to be 56 feet tall when they are maximum of four stories. With the exception of the prominent roof line canopy/stairwell along Huron Boulevard SE, the building will be under 56 feet tall. The canopy/stairwell along Huron Boulevard SE comprises only three percent of the overall building footprint (376 square feet of 12,783 square feet) and is approximately 60 feet away from the nearest nonresidential structure at 501 Huron Boulevard SE and 80 feet away from the nearest residential structure at 1015 Essex Street SE. Allowing the building to be five stories rather than four stories will also not be detrimental or endanger the public health, safety, comfort or general welfare.

2. *The conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.*

The additional height is not expected to be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. The proposed development is in compliance with the existing and proposed zoning district height requirement of 56 feet for 97 percent of the building footprint. The portion of the building that is seven feet taller than the zoning district height requirement is setback more than 60 feet from neighboring nonresidential and residential uses. In addition, the shorter buildings closest to the taller part of the proposed hotel are located a similar distance to taller buildings at 515 Huron Boulevard SE (6 stories) and the Stadium View Apartments (10 stories) at 2508 Delaware Street SE. The additional height will also not impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property. The Huron Boulevard Gateway District, which the property is located in, is recognized by the Stadium Village University Avenue Transit Station Area Plan as a prime area for redevelopment into high-density residential that will typically be built five stories or taller.

3. *Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, necessary facilities or other measures, have been or will be provided.*

Adequate utilities, access roads and drainage will be provided as part of the project. The applicant received initial City of Minneapolis department comments (including Public Works) at a meeting on March 19, 2014. None of the comments received by City of Minneapolis departments will require major revisions to the siting, access and design of the building. The applicant will be required to continue to work closely with the Public Works Department, the Plan Review Section of the Inspections Department and the various utility companies during the duration of the development should the applications be approved. This would be required to ensure that all procedures are followed and that the development complies with all City and other applicable requirements.

4. *Adequate measures have been or will be taken to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.*

The applicant has proposed adequate measures to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets. The applicant is proposing to meet their minimum off-street parking requirement (41 off-street parking spaces) and provide eight bicycle parking spaces near the front entrance; a hotel use is not required to provide bike parking. The project will also have a well-designed off-street loading/unloading near the front entrance for guests. Furthermore, the applicant's proposal to have all underground parking exit onto Huron Boulevard SE will provide a direct route to Interstate 94. Finally, being located within three blocks of the METRO Green Line-Stadium Village Transit station will increase the percentage of people traveling to the hotel by mass transit.

The applicant submitted a draft travel demand management plan (TDMP) for the proposed hotel on March 20, 2014, that further shows their commitment to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets. The developer has identified a mode split of 30 percent automobile, 20 percent shuttle/taxis/private transportation services, 30 percent transit and 20 percent bike/walk. The TDMP also states that the hotel management will be committed to meeting the mode split by developing and implementing an incentive program to encourage guests and employees to use alternative modes of transportation, designating a TDM liaison to coordinate the various TDM strategies and monitoring the implementation of the proposed TDMP actions and progress made toward achieving the TDMP mode split goals.

5. *The conditional use is consistent with the applicable policies of the comprehensive plan.*

Approving the conditional permit for the proposed height increase would be consistent with the following land use, transportation and urban design policies of the comprehensive plan.

Land Use Policy 1.2: Ensure appropriate transitions between uses with different size, scale and intensity.

I.2.1 Promote quality design in new development, as well as building orientation, scale, massing, buffering and setbacks that are appropriate with the context of the surrounding area.

Land Use Policy I.13: Support high-density development near transit stations in ways that encourage transit use and contribute to interesting and vibrant places.

I.13.1 Encourage pedestrian-oriented services and retail uses as part of higher-density development near transit stations.

I.13.2 Pursue opportunities to integrate existing and new development with transit stations through joint development.

Policy I.15: Support development of growth centers as locations for concentration of jobs and housing and supporting services.

I.15.1 Support development of growth centers through planning efforts to guide decisions and prioritize investments in these areas.

I.15.2 Support the intensification of jobs in growth centers through employment generating development.

Transportation Policy 2.4: Make transit a more attractive option for both new and existing riders.

2.4.3 Encourage higher intensity and transit-oriented development to locate in areas well served by transit.

Urban Design Policy 10.9: Support urban design standards that emphasize traditional urban form with pedestrian scale design features at the street level in mixed-use and transit-oriented development.

10.9.1 Encourage both mixed-use buildings and a mix of uses in separate buildings where appropriate.

Urban Design Policy 10.10: Support urban design standards that emphasize a traditional urban form in commercial areas.

10.10.1 Enhance the City's commercial districts by encouraging appropriate building forms and designs, historic preservation objectives, site plans that enhance the pedestrian environment and by maintaining high quality four season public spaces and infrastructure.

10.10.4 Orient new buildings to the street to foster safe and successful commercial nodes and corridors.

10.10.6 Require storefront window transparency to assure both natural surveillance and an inviting pedestrian experience.

Urban Design Policy 10.18: Reduce the visual impact of automobile parking facilities.

6. *The conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located.*

With the approval of the rezoning, conditional use permit, variances and site plan review applications, this development would be in conformance with the applicable regulations of the zoning code.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS TO INCREASE MAXIMUM HEIGHT

In addition to the conditional use standards, the City Planning Commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors when determining the maximum height:

1. Access to light and air of surrounding properties.

The proposed building will have no effect on the access to light and air of surrounding properties of surrounding buildings. The building is meeting the zoning district setbacks and approximately 97 percent of the building will meet the existing and proposed zoning district height requirement of 56 feet. The applicant is seeking a conditional use permit to allow a 376 square foot portion of the building to extend to 63 feet in height along Huron Boulevard SE. This portion of the building will be at least 60 feet from the nearest building, which provides ample distance to not have a shadowing impact.

2. Shadowing of residential properties or significant public spaces.

The portion of the project that extends beyond the zoning district height requirement would not create a shadowing effect on residential properties or significance public spaces. The portion of the building that exceeds the zoning district height requirement is located at least 80 feet away from the nearest residential structure (1015 Essex Street SE). As shown by the applicant's shadowing study, this separation distance will eliminate any shadowing impact of the small portion of the building that will be seven feet higher than allowed. The additional height request will also not have an impact on significance public spaces. The nearest significant public spaces are Luxton Park three blocks to the SE and TCF Stadium Plaza, three blocks to the north.

3. The scale and character of surrounding uses.

The proposed development will fit in with the scale of the surrounding uses. Although the proposed six-story building is taller than the older, nearby 1.5 to three -story residential structures, it is shorter than the newer apartment building development within the immediate area. This includes the six-story Solhaus Tower directly across Huron Boulevard SE (515 Huron Boulevard SE), the six-story Solhaus located one block to the northeast (2428 Delaware Street SE) and the 11-story WaHu Student Housing project, 2.5 blocks to the northeast (2408 University Avenue SE).

4. Preservation of views of landmark buildings, significant open spaces or water bodies.

The proposed project will not have an impact of views of landmark buildings, significant open spaces or water bodies. The project will be located five blocks from the nearest local historic landmark (Fire Station #19), more than three blocks from the nearest significant open space and more than five blocks from the nearest water body.

VARIANCE: FAR

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to increase the maximum floor area ratio from 2.7 to 3.2 based on the following [findings](#):

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

The applicant is seeking a variance to increase the maximum floor area ratio from 2.7 to 3.2. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The subject site is located within the University of Minnesota Growth Center and within a ¼ mile of the Stadium Village Transit Station Area. The comprehensive plan generally supports greater development within growth centers and transit station areas greater than 2.7. Recent nearby

examples of greater F.A.R. ratios include the Solhaus Tower at 515 Huron Boulevard SE (3.6 F.A.R.), the Solhaus at 2428 Delaware Street SE (3.6 F.A.R) and the WaHu Student Housing project (5.1 F.A.R.).

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

The request is reasonable and is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan. Even though the building exceeds floor area ratio requirement, the applicant has taken measures to reduce the building's impact by having all of the off-street parking underground and complying with the height requirement for 97 percent of the building.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property. If granted, the new development will have a lower floor area ratio compared to the new development within a three-block area. This includes the Solhaus Tower at 515 Huron Boulevard SE (3.6 F.A.R.), the Solhaus at 2428 Delaware Street SE (3.6 F.A.R) and the WaHu Student Housing project (5.1 F.A.R.).

The proposed variance will also not be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity nor be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public. The applicant is proposing to meet or exceed the building setbacks on all side of the building and will meet the height requirement for the existing and proposed zoning district of 56 feet for 97 percent of the building.

VARIANCE: Setback driveway

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application to allow for a variance to reduce the interior setback (south) from 5 feet to 2.1 feet to allow for an uncovered driveway based on the following [findings](#):

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

The applicant is proposing to reduce the setback from 5 feet to 2.1 feet along the south interior property line to allow for an uncovered driveway. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The design incorporates separate ingress and egress ramps based on consultation with Minneapolis Public Works to mitigate congestion and improve traffic flow on Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE. As the applicant points out, the drive ramps have to be located at the edges of the property in order to allow for required circulation and parking stalls.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the compressive plan. The purpose of the setback requirement for driveways of nonresidential uses next to residential uses is to minimize the conflict

among the land uses by providing adequate open space and separation. The applicant has made efforts to develop a compatible use that minimizes any conflict between the hotel use and neighboring residential use. The applicant is proposing a 12-foot wide driveway along the southern property line for exiting traffic, the narrowest driveway allowed in the C3A zoning district. In addition, the applicant is proposing to screen the driveway with a three-foot high, metal, decorative fence and arborvitae. Furthermore, the impact of the driveway being 2.1 feet from the property line will be mitigated by the fact the driveway is lower than the adjacent property for the entire property and the neighboring apartment building is nine feet from the shared property line.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

Granting of the proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. The applicant has taken measures to reduce the impact of having a driveway at 2.1 feet from the property line including planting of arborvitae along the property line and by having the driveway lower than the adjacent property.

If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties. The driveway will be nine feet away from the neighboring building and the applicant is proposing a 3.5 high railing the first 80 feet of the driveway. For the remaining 14.25 feet, the applicant is proposing to install a three foot high, metal decorative fence.

VARIANCE: Loading

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application to reduce the number of off-street loading spaces from 2 to 0 based on the following [findings](#):

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

Per Table 541-8, the proposed hotel project requires two large loading spaces. Per 541.560, the loading spaces are required to be at least 12 feet in width by at least 50 feet in length, exclusive of aisle and maneuvering space. In addition, a vertical clearance of at least 14 feet is required. Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The subject site's water table is at or near 13 feet below grade. The depth of the water table and City of Minneapolis strong encouragement of having subgrade structures built to prevent the infiltration of groundwater without the need for a permanent dewatering system will not allow for the construction of the basement to go below 13 feet. This is not sufficient in meeting the 14-foot vertical clearance for off-street loading spaces. In addition, there is limited space above ground to meet all zoning code and use needs. The applicant is proposing a drop-off area in the front of the Essex Street SE entrance. However, this area will not count towards providing a loading space because the vertical clearance for the new construction first floor is less than 14 feet.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and comprehensive plan. The intent of the zoning code in requiring off-street loading spaces is to reduce traffic congestion in the public streets. The applicant

states that deliveries will be made by small trucks that can use the on-site drop-off zone and the main entry. The applicant also states that large trucks will not be servicing the hotel. CPED recognizes that the number of deliveries will be substantially less for the proposed hotel given that there will not be a restaurant, meeting hall, or event facility. With the drop-off area in front of the building, the applicant will be able to accommodate the loading and unloading of at least two vehicles at a time.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

Granting of the proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality, given that the proposed development has an on-site drop-off area that will accommodate smaller trucks that will provide deliveries to the hotel.

In addition, granting of the variance will also not be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity, not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or those utilizing the property or nearby property given that most of the deliveries will take place onsite.

VARIANCE: Setback transformer

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application for a variance to reduce the front yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line to allow a transformer based on the following [findings](#):

1. *Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone.*

The applicant is proposing a transformer that would be located 16.4 feet from the south interior side property line and 9 feet from the front yard setback along Huron Boulevard, SE. The proposed transformer would be approximately five feet tall and 14 square feet (four feet by 3.2 feet). The concrete pad underneath the electrical transformer is approximately 90 square feet. Per 548.140 (b) (1), the established front yard setback is 14.25 feet for the first 25 feet from the adjacent residential property to the south.

Practical difficulties exist in complying with the ordinance because of circumstances unique to the property. The unique circumstances were not created by persons presently having an interest in the property and are not based on economic considerations alone. The applicant has indicated that the electrical transformer needs to be readily accessible by the power company for maintenance and repair purposes. In addition, the electrical transformer has to maintain a ten foot setback from any operable openings in the building. This requirement limits where the electrical transformer can be placed on the site. To help minimize the transformer visibility, CPED is recommending that the applicant work with staff to provide landscaping to the east and south of the transformer to minimize its visibility from Huron Boulevard SE and the neighboring property to the south.

2. *The property owner or authorized applicant proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan.*

The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner that will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and comprehensive plan. The intent of the zoning code in not allowing transformers in required yards is to provide for the orderly development and use of land and to minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses by regulating the dimension and use of yards in order to provide adequate light, air, open space and separation of uses. The applicant has proposed to place the transformer 16.4 feet from the south property line which is 25 feet away from the neighboring building to the south. This distance, combined with the applicant's proposed screening plan and CPED's recommended condition of approval of having additional landscaping to the south and east of the transformer will assist in minimizing the conflict between the subject site and the residential use to the south.

3. *The proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. If granted, the proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties.*

Granting of the proposed variance will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity. The applicant has taken measures to reduce the impact of having the transformer in the front yard setback. The applicant has located the transformer 16 feet from the shared southern property line and 25 feet from the neighboring building to the south. In addition, the applicant is proposing to plant arborvitae and two trees along the south property line and install a decorative metal fence to help screen the transformer from the property to the south. The proposed variance will not be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of the general public or of those utilizing the property or nearby properties based on the applicant's proposed transformer location, the screening plan and CPED's condition of approval for additional screening.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development has analyzed the application based on the required [findings](#) and [applicable standards](#) in the site plan review chapter:

I. Conformance to all applicable standards of Chapter 530, Site Plan Review.

Building Placement and Design – Requires alternative compliance

- The proposed building will have a street presence at or near the property lines along Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE, while respecting the required setbacks. This will help the building reinforce the street wall along both streets. The placement of the building and the proposed fenestration that exceeds minimum requirements will maximize natural surveillance and visibility of the area. The building entrances and exits near the public sidewalks will facilitate pedestrian access and circulation.
- As previously stated, the proposed building will have a street presence at or near the property lines along Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE. However, there are two portions of the building that do not meet the standard of having the building less than eight feet from the front property line. The western 80 feet of the building's first floor along Essex Street will only have pillars at the property line for a covered drop-off area and recessed entrance. The active space and main building entrance is setback 19 feet at its furthest point from Essex Street SE. Alternative compliance is requested. In addition, an 11-foot section of the building along Huron Boulevard SE near the south property line is setback 18 feet. However, the applicant is proposing this to comply with the zoning code's established front yard setback when bordering a residential property. Given the location of the adjacent residential property to the south, the

subject property's front yard setback is 14.25 feet for the first 25 feet of the property measured from the southern property line. Alternative compliance is not required for this portion of the building.

- The area between the building and the lot lines include amenities. The applicant is proposing enhanced landscaping and seating areas in these areas along both Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE.
- The subject property is a corner lot. The applicant has oriented the building to provide the principal entrance facing the front lot line along Essex Street SE.
- All proposed on-site accessory parking will be entirely below grade.
- The applicant has proposed windows that are in compliance with Chapter 530. The applicant has also proposed architectural detail and windows that create visual interest. This includes designing the building in a classic u-shape hotel design, having windows wrap the corners of the building on each floor and having the portion of the building closest to Huron Boulevard SE clad nearly all in glass along with a projecting roof canopy. Furthermore, the applicant's proposed evenly distributed fenestration and glazing percentages that exceed the zoning code's requirements will increase the security of adjacent outdoor spaces by maximizing natural surveillance and visibility.
- The proposed building has a u-shape design, a prominent roof canopy along Essex Street SE and a portion of the building that is stepped closest to Huron Boulevard SE that is clad nearly entirely in glass. These elements provide recesses and projections that effectively divide the building into smaller identifiable sections.
- The proposed building does not have any blank, uninterrupted walls that exceed 25 feet in length. The distance between windows, entries, recesses or projections does at its furthest point is 21 feet.
- The four elevations will be comprised of brick, stucco, glass and cast concrete (replicating stone on the first floor). All of these materials are considered durable materials.
- The exterior materials and appearance of the west elevations is similar to and compatible with the front of the building. The applicant has continued the brick cladding for the first 80 feet of the building. The exterior materials and appearance of the south elevation, however, is not compatible with the front of the building. With the exception of one band of brick, the upper floors are clad in stucco. Alternative compliance is required.
- The applicant is not proposing to use plain face concrete block as an exterior material.
- The applicant has designed the principal entrance for the nonresidential use on Essex Street SE to be clearly defined and emphasized with a prominent canopy and pillars that will be proud of the building wall.
- The applicant is required to have 30 percent of the walls on the first floor and 10 percent of the walls on the upper floors along Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE be windows. The applicant's proposal will exceed these requirements (see Table I below). The windows included in this calculation will be vertical in proportion, distributed in a more or less even manner and will not have a bottom of the window higher than four feet above grade. As a condition of approval, the first floor windows shall have clear or lightly tinted glass with a visible light transmittance ratio of 0.6 or higher and the ground floor will have windows that allow views into and out of the building at eye level without shelving, mechanical equipment or other similar fixtures that block views into and out of the building in the area between four and seven feet above the adjacent grade for the required window calculations.
- The first floor of the Essex Street SE and the Huron Boulevard SE are designed to accommodate active functions. None of the first floor of either street elevation is designed for parking, loading, storage, or mechanical equipment rooms.

- The applicant is proposing a flat roof, which is similar to the neighboring buildings that primarily have flat roofs.
- The applicant is proposing an underground parking garage that will not be visible from the public street or from properties to the west and south.

Table I. Percentage of Windows Required for Elevations Facing a Public Street, Sidewalk, Pathway, or On-Site Parking for a Nonresidential Use

	Code Requirement		Proposed	
Essex Street SE				
1 st Floor	30% minimum	305 sq. ft.	60%	610 sq. ft.
2 nd Floor and Above	10% minimum	102 sq. ft.	26%	266 sq. ft.
Huron Boulevard SE				
1 st Floor	30% minimum	281 sq. ft.	41%	387 sq. ft.
2 nd Floor and Above	10% minimum	94 sq. ft.	25%	235 sq. ft.

Access and Circulation – Requires alternative compliance

- The main entrance along Essex Street SE has a drop-off area that will double as the pedestrian connection to the Essex Street SE sidewalk. This area will be well-lighted. As a condition of approval to help delineate a clear walkway for pedestrians, CPED is recommending that the applicant install a differentiated pavement that leads from the vestibule to the Essex Street SE sidewalk on both sides of the drive apron.
- The applicant is not proposing a transit shelter for the proposed hotel project.
- Vehicular access/circulation is designed to minimize conflicts with pedestrians and surrounding residential uses. Essex Street SE is a one-way street with a bike lane. The applicant is proposing a drop-off area on the property that will reduce the amount of parking of guests in the bike lane. To reduce the conflict with pedestrians, the applicant has proposed to narrow the curb cuts along Essex Street SE (14 feet and 16 feet) and Huron Boulevard SE (12 feet). However, as stated above, alternative compliance is required for not having a clear and well-lighted walkway of at least four feet in width connecting building entrances to the adjacent public sidewalk.
- The proposed design is intended to minimize the impact of traffic on residential uses. The applicant is proposing that vehicles access the site along Essex Street SE and exit the site via Huron Boulevard SE. The applicant’s proposal to direct exiting traffic to Huron Boulevard SE will reduce the traffic buildup that takes place at the Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE traffic light. The proposed hotel will have the same number of curb cuts as existing conditions in the same locations, two along Essex Street SE and one along Huron Boulevard SE. The subject properties are not adjacent to an alley.
- The proposed design is intended to minimize the use of impervious surfaces. The area of the site that is not building or driveway will be landscaped. In addition, the applicant has reduced the width of driveways in order to increase the square footage dedicated to landscaping/pervious surfaces.

Landscaping and Screening – Requires alternative compliance

- The applicant is proposing extensive landscaping between the building and property lines along Essex Street SE and Huron Boulevard SE that complements the scale of development and surroundings. The applicant’s proposal will improve the landscaping appearance compared to existing conditions. The proposed landscaping creates will also create a contiguous planting area.
- The applicant’s landscaping proposal exceeds the minimum requirements outlined in Section 530.160 of the zoning code (see Table 2 below). The applicant is required to have 20 percent of

the site not occupied by the building be landscaped, one canopy tree for every 500 square feet of required landscaping and one shrub for every 100 square feet of required landscaping. The applicant is proposing to have 24 percent of the site not occupied by the building be landscaped, 11 canopy trees and 57 shrubs.

- The proposed drop-off area along Essex Street SE is proposed to be 1.5 feet from the front property line.
- Per Section 530.170 of the Minneapolis zoning code, loading facilities fronting a public street, require a landscaped yard of at least seven feet wide between the loading area and public street. In addition, the landscaped area shall include screening consisting of either a masonry wall, fence, berm, or hedge or combination thereof that forms a screen three feet in height and not less than 60 percent opaque and not less than one tree shall be provided for every 25 feet of the loading area lot frontage. The applicant’s proposal does not include landscaping and screening that meet these requirements. Alternative compliance is required for the landscaped yard, screening and tree requirement.
- The applicant is not proposing a surface parking lot for the hotel.
- All areas not covered by the building, driveways and walkways are proposed to be covered by landscaping.
- As a condition of approval, the installation and maintenance of all landscape materials shall comply with 530.210.

Table 2. Landscaping and Screening Requirements

	Code Requirement	Proposed
Lot Area	19,782	N/A
Building footprint	12,783	N/A
Remaining Lot Area	6,999	N/A
Landscaping Required	1,400 sq. ft.	1,646 sq. ft.
Canopy Trees (1: 500 sq. ft.)	3 trees	7 trees
Shrubs (1: 100 sq. ft.)	14 shrubs	57 shrubs

Additional Standards – Meets requirements

- The proposed project does not have a parking lot. The driveway is designed with continuous curbing. This does not provide on-site retention and filtration of stormwater. However, the on-site retention and filtration of the small project site is not practical.
- The proposed project will not obstruct views of important elements of the City such as parks and greenways, significant buildings and water bodies.
- The proposed building is located and arranged to minimize shadowing on adjacent properties. The proposed building is meeting the building setbacks on the four sides (see Table 7 below). In addition, the proposed building will meet the zoning district height requirement of 56 feet for 97 percent of the building’s footprint. The only portion of the building that extends beyond the zoning district’s height allowance is the roof canopy/stairwell along Huron Boulevard SE. This portion of the building is located 60 feet away from the nearest nonresidential structure at 501 Huron Boulevard SE and 80 feet away from the nearest residential structure at 1015 Essex Street SE.
- The proposed building will not have a major impact on wind currents at ground level.
- Crime prevention through environmental design elements have been included in the proposed plan. This includes an evenly distributed fenestration proposal that exceeds zoning code requirements and will allow for natural observation and opportunities for people to observe adjacent spaces and public sidewalks on all sides of the building. The applicant has incorporated

territorial reinforcement and space delineation with the proposed placement of the building, landscaping and fencing. As a condition of approval, CPED is recommending that the fence be an open and decorative fence made of metal. In addition, CPED is recommending the applicant continue the open and decorative fence on the east and south side of the transformer. Furthermore, the proposed project provides adequate natural access control to guide people coming to and going from the site. The Essex Street SE elevation and entrance is designed to attract people to enter and exit that part of the building. As conditioned, the applicant's proposed lighting levels will maintain an acceptable level of security at all building entrances within the drop-off area that maintains a minimum acceptable level of security while not creating glare or excessive lighting of the site.

- The project site did not include locally designated historic structures or structures that are considered eligible for designation. As part of the project the applicant will demolish these four houses.

2. Conformance with all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance.

The properties at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE are zoned R5 and are located within the University Area Overlay District. The applicant has requested a rezoning of the subject parcels from R5 to C3A to allow for a hotel. A hotel is a permitted use in the C3A zoning district. If the rezoning application, conditional use permit, variances and site plan are approved the project will comply with all applicable regulations of the zoning ordinance.

Off-street Parking and Loading – Requires a variance (off-street loading spaces)

- The applicant's proposed off-street parking plan is in compliance with the off-street parking minimum and maximum requirement for vehicles (see Table 3 below). The minimum vehicle parking requirement for a hotel is one space per three guest rooms plus parking equal to 10 percent of the capacity of persons for affiliated uses such as dining or meeting rooms. The maximum vehicle parking is one space per guest room plus parking equal to 30 percent of the capacity of persons for affiliated uses such as dining and meeting rooms. As part of the proposed project, there will be no dining or meeting rooms for non-overnight guests. Therefore, the off-street parking requirement for the project is based on the number of guest rooms only. The proposed hotel project would have 122-guest rooms which would require a minimum of 41 off-street parking spaces. The maximum number of off-street parking spaces allowed for a 122-guest room hotel is 122 off-street parking spaces. In order to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines two of the 41 off-street parking spaces will be designated as handicap spaces. The applicant is proposing that 24 percent of the off-street parking spaces be compact spaces (nine of the 41 spaces). Per Section 541.330 of the Minneapolis zoning code, 25 percent of the off-street parking spaces can be compact spaces.
- Per Table 541-3, a hotel use does not have a bicycle parking requirement. However, the applicant is proposing to provide bike parking for eight bikes in the public right-of-way, approximately 20 feet from the principal hotel entrance.
- The applicant's proposal does not meet the Minneapolis zoning code's loading requirements. The applicant is seeking a variance. Their proposal is evaluated in the variance section above.

Table 3. Vehicle Parking Requirements Per Use ([Chapter 541](#))

	Minimum Parking Requirement	Applicable Reductions	Total Minimum Requirement	Maximum Parking Allowed	Proposed
Hotel/Total	41	N/A	41	122	41

Table 4. Bicycle Parking and Loading Requirements (Chapter 54I)

	Minimum Bicycle Parking	Minimum Short-Term	Minimum Long-Term	Proposed	Loading Requirement	Proposed
Hotel/Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	Medium/2 large loading spaces	0

Building Bulk and Height – Requires a variance (F.A.R.) and a conditional use permit (height)

- There is not a minimum lot area requirement for a hotel in the C3A Zoning District.
- The applicant is requesting a variance to increase the floor area ratio from 2.7 to 3.2.
- The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow for an increase in height from 4 stories/56 feet to 5 stories/63 feet.

Table 5. Building Bulk and Height Requirements

	Code Requirement	Proposed
Minimum Lot Area	N/A per 548.340	19,782 sq. ft. / 0.45 acres
Gross Floor Area (GFA)	N/A	62,787 sq. ft
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (GFA/Lot Area)	2.7 per 548.350	3.2
Maximum Building Height	4 stories/56 feet, whichever is less per 548.350	5 stories/63 feet

Residential Lot Requirements –/Not applicable

- The proposed development is a nonresidential use, therefore, does not have residential lot requirements.

Yard Requirements – Requires a variance (driveway and transformer)

- The proposed building will meet all yard requirements. The applicant, however, is requesting a variance to reduce the interior setback (south) from 5 feet to 2.1 feet to allow for an uncovered driveway and a variance to reduce the front yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line to allow for a transformer (see variance section above for evaluation).

Table 7. Minimum Yard Requirements for a Hotel

	Zoning District	Overriding Regulations	Total Requirement	Proposed
Front (Essex)	0 ft.	Established front yard setback for the first 25 feet from the residence district boundary to the west (548.140 (b))	16.25 ft.	16.25 ft. for the first 25 feet from the residence district boundary to the west
Front (Huron)	0 ft.	Established front yard setback for the first 25 feet from the residence district boundary to the south (548.140 (b))	14.3 ft.	14.3 ft. for the first 25 feet from the residence district boundary to the south
Interior (West)	5+2X provided that the minimum interior side yard is not greater than fifteen (15) feet. ft.*	N/A	13 ft.	18 ft.
Interior (South)	5+2X provided that the minimum interior side yard is not greater than fifteen (15) feet. ft.*	N/A	13 ft.	15.2 ft.

* X = Number of stories above the first floor

Signs – Not applicable

- All new signs are required to meet the requirements of Chapter 543 of the zoning code. Separate permits are required from the Zoning Office for any proposed signage. The applicant states the signage for the proposed hotel is to be determined.

Dumpster Screening – Meets requirements

- The applicant’s proposal for screening of refuse and recycling containers meets requirements. Refuse storage containers are required to be screened from the street, adjacent residential uses located in a residence or office residence district and adjacent permitted or conditional residential uses. The applicant is proposing to have the refuse and recycling containers within the underground garage.

Screening of Mechanical Equipment – As conditioned, meets requirements

- The applicant is proposing two roof top mechanical units that are setback from the street. These units are shown to be screened on the proposed roof plan. As conditioned, the applicant’s rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened to be in compliance with Section 535.70.

Fencing- Meets requirements

- The applicant’s proposal for a fence and railing is in compliance with the fence requirements in Chapter 535 of the Minneapolis zoning code. Along the western property line, the applicant is proposing a 3-foot high fence for the first 16 feet from Essex Street SE and then a 3.5 foot high

railing along the outer edge of ramp to the parking garage. Along the southern property line, the applicant is proposing to install a 3-foot high fence for the first 18 feet from Huron Boulevard SE, and then install a 3.5 foot high railing along the outer edge of the parking garage. The applicant states that the fence design will be in the traditional wrought iron picket style and constructed of aluminum.

Lighting – As conditioned, meets requirements

- The applicant did not submit a lighting plan, however, they provided details of their lighting plan. They are committed to submitting a photometric plan that is in compliance with the zoning code. The applicant is proposing to add wall mounted sconces on the building elevations on Huron Boulevard SE and Essex Street SE and wall sconces and ceiling mounted lights in the recessed drop-off area. In addition, wall mounted lights will also be provided on the building's south and west faces for security but will be cutoff fixtures so as not cast light onto the adjacent residential areas. As conditioned, the applicant's proposal will meet the lighting requirements outlined in Section 535.590 and 541.57 of the Minneapolis zoning code.

Impervious Surface Area – Not applicable

- The C3A Zoning District does not have an impervious surface requirement. The project will meet its landscaping and screening requirement as outlined above.

Specific Development Standards – Meets requirements

- The applicant's proposal meets the specific development standards for hotels in Chapter 536. Chapter 536 requires that hotels outside of downtown districts provide a minimum of 50 guest sleeping rooms. The applicant is proposing 122 guest-sleeping rooms.

University Area Overlay District Standards – Not applicable

- The University Area (UA) Overlay District standards are not applicable for the proposed commercial use. The UA overlay requirements pertain to residential development.

3. Conformance with the applicable policies of *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth*.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth identifies the site as public and institutional on the future land use map. The proposed development is consistent with the public and institutional land use category guidance. The proposed development is consistent with the land use, transportation and urban design policies and implementation steps listed in Finding One of the rezoning application and Finding Five of the conditional use permit application. In addition, the project is in compliance with the following economic development, environmental and urban design policies and implementation steps.

Economic Development Policy 4.1: Support private sector growth to maintain a healthy, diverse economy.

Economic Development Policy 4.9: Focus economic development efforts in strategic locations for continued growth and sustained vitality.

- 4.9.1 Prioritize economic development efforts around designated neighborhood commercial nodes, commercial corridors, activity centers and growth centers.

Environmental Policy 6.8: Encourage a healthy thriving urban tree canopy and other desirable forms of vegetation.

6.8.2 Achieve, at a minimum, no net loss of the urban tree canopy by maintaining and preserving existing trees and planting new trees on public and private property.

Urban Design Policy 10.11: Seek new commercial development that is attractive, functional and adds value to the physical environment.

10.11.1 Require the location of new commercial development (office, research and development and related light manufacturing) to take advantage of locational amenities and coexist with neighbors in mixed-use environments.

10.11.4 Maximize the year round potential for public transit, biking and walking in new developments.

Urban Design Policy 10.13: Work with institutional and public partners to assure that the scale and form of new development or expansion will occur in a manner most compatible with the surrounding area.

10.13.3 Encourage institutional uses and public buildings and facilities to incorporate architectural and site design that is reflective of their civic importance and that identifies their role as focal points for the community.

Urban Design Policy 10.17: Provide sufficient lighting to reflect community character, provide a comfortable environment in a northern city and promote environmentally friendly lighting systems.

10.17.1 Provide high-quality lighting fixture designs that are appropriate to street types and land use and that provide pedestrian friendly illumination, but minimize glare and dark sky conditions and other unnecessary light pollution.

Urban Design Policy 10.18: Reduce the visual impact of automobile parking facilities.

Urban Design Policy 10.19: Landscaping is encouraged in order to complement the scale of the site and its surroundings, enhance the built environment, create and define public and private spaces, buffer and screen, incorporate crime prevention principles and provide shade, aesthetic appeal and environmental benefits.

10.19.4 Landscaped areas should be maintained in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, to allow views into and out of the site, to preserve view corridors and to maintain sight lines at vehicular and pedestrian intersections.

10.19.7 Boulevard landscaping and improvements, in accordance with applicable City policies, are encouraged.

4. Conformance with applicable development plans or objectives adopted by the City Council.

The proposed project is in compliance with the following land use and public realm recommendations of the Stadium Village University Avenue Small Area Plan.

- Land Use: Generally speaking support high-density residential development in the Huron Boulevard Corridor Character Area.
- Land Use: Encourage land uses along Huron to support a pedestrian oriented environment, balanced against heavy vehicle traffic flow and acknowledging its role as a gateway to the area.

- **Urban Design and Public Realm:** Where existing sidewalks are less than 10 feet wide, encourage new buildings to be set back a minimum of 5-6 feet (within the frontage zone) when possible, to create wider sidewalks for outdoor seating and streetscape amenities.

Even though the applicant is proposing a nonresidential use, the proposed rezoning from R5 to C3A will continue to support the high-density residential development that the small area plan calls for by having a zoning district that is complementary to adjacent medium and high-density residential areas. It should also be noted project site is one of only four blocks within the Huron Boulevard Corridor Character Area that has a public and institutional future land use designation rather than high-density residential for the other blocks and parcels in the character area.

As highlighted in the site plan review section of the staff report, the applicant has proposed improvements along Huron Boulevard SE to improve the pedestrian experience with enhanced landscaping and benches. In addition, the applicant has made efforts to make the building a gateway along Huron Boulevard SE with the projecting roof canopy and large vertically oriented glazing area on the portion of the building that is set forward from the rest of the east elevation.

5. Alternative compliance.

The Planning Commission or zoning administrator may approve alternatives to any site plan review requirement upon finding that project meets one of three criteria required for [alternative compliance](#). Alternative compliance is requested for the following requirements:

- **First floor of the building shall be located not more than eight feet from the front lot line.** The placement of the building on Essex Street SE will not reinforce the street wall or be within eight feet of the adjacent street for the western 87 feet of the north elevation. This portion of the building is setback 19 feet from the front property line and is designed to be a drop-off area and recessed entrance. Even though the first floor is setback 19 feet on the west side, the applicant has designed the outer portion of the covered drop-off area and entrance to match the eastern side of the Essex Street SE elevation that is at property line by continuing the cast stone detail to the property line. The openings in the drop-off area are close in size to the window openings on the west side of the elevation and have a base to help with a building presence at the property line. Behind the drop-off area are large windows for a library and lobby area. The windows and active functions will help provide street activity. In addition, the upper floors of the building extend to the property line along Essex Street SE. For these reasons, staff recommends that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance.
- **The exterior materials and appearance of south side wall shall be similar to and compatible with the front of the building.** The exterior materials and appearance of the south elevation is not consistent with the front elevations of the building. With the exception of one band of brick on the south elevation, the upper floors are clad in stucco. This creates a flat-surface for nearly the entire elevation. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission require the applicant to replace the stucco with brick on floors two through four for the first two bays nearest Huron Boulevard SE. This design detail would be similar to the north elevation and will be clearly visible for the thousands of people that travel on Huron Boulevard SE on a daily basis.
- **Clear and well-lighted walkways connect building entrance to public sidewalk.** A clear and well-lighted walkway of at least four feet in width is required to connect the building entrance to the adjacent public sidewalk. The main entrance on Essex Street SE is also the exiting point for vehicles using the drop-off area. Vehicular traffic will not be traveling at fast speeds within the drop-off area; however, to help improve the safety for pedestrians accessing the main entrance from Huron Boulevard SE or Erie Street SE, staff is recommending that the

Planning Commission require the applicant to install a differentiated pavement that leads from the vestibule to the Essex Street SE sidewalk on both sides of the drive apron.

- **For loading facilities fronting a public street, a landscaped yard of at least seven feet wide shall be provided between the loading area and public street.** The applicant is not proposing to install a landscaped yard between the loading area and the property line. The proposed covered drop-off area is located 1.5 feet from the property line. However, the applicant is proposing to landscape the eight-foot-wide boulevard that is located between the building and the Essex Street SE sidewalk. In addition, the design of the covered drop-off area and the location at the property line helps the building have a street presence. For these reasons, staff recommends that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance.
- **For loading areas fronting a public street, screening consisting of either a masonry wall, fence, berm or hedge or combination thereof that forms a screen three feet in height and not less than 60 percent opaque shall be provided.** The applicant is not proposing to install screening with an opacity of 60 percent between the loading area and the property line. The applicant has designed the outer portion of the covered drop-off area to match the eastern side of the Essex Street SE elevation that is at property line by continuing the cast stone detail to the property line. This includes having a 1.5 foot tall base for the entire loading area. In addition, the applicant is proposing to install large windows for a library and lobby area immediately behind the drop-off area. The windows and the building's active functions will provide street eyes on the street. For these reasons, staff recommends that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in not requiring additional screening for the loading area.
- **Not less than one (1) tree shall be provided for each twenty-five (25) linear feet or fraction thereof of parking or loading area lot frontage.** The applicant is not proposing to install a tree every 25 feet on the property between the loading area and property line. However, with Park Board approval, the applicant is proposing to install two canopy trees in the public-right-of-way that will help screen the 50-foot loading area. In addition, the applicant is proposing to install large windows for a library and lobby area immediately behind the drop-off area. The windows and active functions will help provide street activity. For these reasons, staff recommends that the Planning Commission grant alternative compliance in not requiring additional screening for the loading area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the rezoning application:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the findings and **approve** the rezoning of the properties located at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE from the R5/Multiple Family District to the C3A/Community Activity Center District.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the conditional use permit:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a conditional use permit to allow an increase in the maximum permitted height of a commercial building from 4 stories or 56 feet

to approximately 5 stories or 63 feet at the tallest point for the properties located at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE, subject to the following conditions:

- I. The conditional use permit shall be recorded with Hennepin County as required by Minn. Stat. 462.3595, subd. 4 before building permits may be issued or before the use or activity requiring a conditional use permit may commence. Unless extended by the zoning administrator, the conditional use permit shall expire if it is not recorded within two years of approval.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to allow for an increase in the maximum floor area ratio from 2.7 to 3.2 for the commercial building located at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to reduce the interior setback (south) from 5 feet to 2.1 feet to allow for an uncovered driveway for the proposed project located at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to reduce the number of off-street loading spaces from 2 to 0 for the proposed project located at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the variance:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the application for a variance to reduce the front yard requirement adjacent to the south lot line to allow a transformer for the proposed project located at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development for the Site Plan Review:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt the above findings and **approve** the site plan review application to allow for the construction of a five-story, 122-room hotel for the property at 1014-1022 Essex Street SE and 506 Huron Boulevard SE, subject to the following conditions:

1. To ensure compatibility on all sides of the building, the south elevation shall have the stucco replaced with brick on floors two through four for at least two additional bays nearest Huron Boulevard SE.
2. The first floor windows shall have clear or lightly tinted glass with a visible light transmittance ratio of 0.6 or higher and the ground floor will have windows that allow views into and out of the building at eye level without shelving, mechanical equipment or other similar fixtures that block views into and out of the building in the area between four

- (4) and seven (7) feet above the adjacent grade for the required window calculations.
3. The applicant shall work with staff to provide landscaping to the east and south of the transformer to minimize its visibility from Huron Boulevard SE and the neighboring property to the south.
 4. The installation and maintenance of all landscape materials shall comply with 530.210. The rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened to be in compliance with Section 535.70.
 5. A lighting plan shall be submitted that is in compliance with Section 535.590 and 541.570 of the Minneapolis zoning code.
 6. Within the drop-off area, the applicant shall install a differentiated pavement that leads from the vestibule to the Essex Street SE sidewalk on both sides of the drive apron.
 7. The applicant shall install a fence on the east and south side of the transformer. The fence around the transformer and along the south and west property lines shall be an open and decorative metal fence.
 8. Department of Community Planning and Economic Development staff review and approval of the final building elevations, floor, site, lighting and landscape plans.
 9. Site improvements required by Chapter 530 or by the City Planning Commission shall be completed by April 7, 2016, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for non-compliance.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Zoning, future land use map and aerial
2. Council member and neighborhood notification
3. Statement of purpose, description of project and statement to findings
4. Site context and images
5. University district development principles
6. Architectural plan set: rendering, survey, site plan, floor plans, elevations and perspectives
7. Civil plan set
8. Shadow study and PDR report